

COURSE REPORT

Background information (To be completed by course administrator)

Course LADOK code: FK202L	Scope (hp): 15,00
Course title: Project Management and Methods in Zones of Conflict	
Course coordinator: Ane Kirkegaard	Number of registered students: 20
Semester in which the course is conducted: HT22	
Is the course an independent course, programme course or contract course? If the course has been completed within a programme, enter the programme name Peace and Conflict Studies	

Administration's perspective (To be completed by course administrator)

The administration's views:

Forms of evaluation and feedback (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Formative course evaluation: (Describe the form of course evaluation and when it was completed)	Number of students who participated in the course evaluation:
Summative course evaluation: Electronic via Canvas	Number of students who participated in the course evaluation: 12
Feedback to students: Canvas	

Student's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Summary of the students' course evaluations: Students generally experienced problems with the structure of the course (modules run parallel, which is unusual). Some seem to have had problems finding the course guide, and other items on Canvas, and hence express a feeling of loss of guidance. There are also some who find that there is a lack of connection between what they do during the course, and the expectations for the exams (clarity coming as they write the exams, which they describe as frustrating). Grading the practical (group) assignment (simulation) is done with a CV/Self Valuation and many don't see the meaning of that (i.e. the relevance of the practical skills development to their CV and self-valuation is lost in the exam write-up process post-simulation). There were also some scheduling mishaps (outside of course coordination control; several other courses had issues that same day) which created frustrations, equally so to the involved teacher.

The overall assessment of the course is that it was OK, but not super. One thinks it was very good, another that it was awful. The points of critique where more than three comments are in agreement will be attended to below. Certain things can be changed

asap, other aspects are more difficult to effectuate immediately. There is a suggestion from one respondent which will be seriously considered for the development of the course.

Teacher's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Summary of the teacher's views/Results:

From the exams (which is the most fundamental form of assessing learning outcomes fulfillment) the changes made this year actually did make sense. The focus of the Conflict Complexity (project proposal) exams this year were on the project proposed, rather than on the conflict analysis. Likewise, the Self Valuations were for the first time focused on the student himself, rather than the fantastic work of the group or the failures of class mates.

Another change was to create a page on Canvas where all course information was collected in one place (i.e. one guide to the course, called A Practical Guide to the Module, rather than 'study packages' as was previously used), reflecting the parallel structure of the modules, followed by resources and the course outline and reading instructions, week-by-week. It is a confusing result from this change: some students seem to have grasped perfectly well where to find the information they needed; a few seem to have been utterly confused. This will be attended to below.

At one point, a full lecture was erased from the schedule without any notification to either teacher or students. Only students who had not checked their updated Kronox came, as did the teacher. That week several other such incidents happened in other courses. Errors do occur, also in the booking office, and the lecture was rescheduled. That the teacher did miss a seminar was extremely unfortunate – the students' initiative to run through it however quickly was good. Learning point: do not book teaching on Wednesdays.

From a teacher's perspective, it is problematic to be a one-man-show for 2/3 of a semester, as has been pointed out several times in the past. This is a managerial decision, and the suggestion is for the current teacher to actually refuse to do the all-15 hp course as of 2023.

Analysis and action plan (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Analysis:

The course is divided into two modules (7,5 hp each) which run parallel, to allow students the time needed for preparations of the practical simulation (organizing an event). This has been an issue for several years as our students are not used to this kind of structure (two half-time courses). It is easier to manage if they have two different teachers for the two different modules, which has not been the case for the last many years. Unless this unfortunate situation changes, the structure of the course must change.

The Course guide (called A Practical Guide to the Module, i.e. one document with information about both modules, with lectures, workshops and assigned readings week-by-week) seems to have created confusion to some rather than the intended clarity (in previous years there were three 'lecture packages' instead of one overarching course

guide, which was criticised, so we reverted back to the more conventional course guide type of format). In other words, some students seemed to be put off by the format itself, i.e. an e-page on Canvas rather than a pdf or word document (perhaps even the naming of it as A Practical Guide...), as it did not look like previous Course Guides they have seen with us. Quite clearly, a couple of students have not actually scrolled down in the Practical Guide to the Module to find the instructions they claim were not available.

Workshops were hands-on; opening with a short lecture on the background of a specific tool (budget, LFA, SWOT, Evaluation), and a short demonstration of its use; then students start applying the tool to their own project, with teacher available to help out and supervise. There were several online resources (guides, online sites for civil society organisers etc.) available through Canvas, and linked literature. During this exercise, some students were a bit unfocused, seeming to find it irritating to have to re-think midway as supervisor looked through. Some also seemed relatively unprepared (e.g. questions asked revealing not having read the assigned literature or watched videos).

The exam period is from mid-December to early January, after all lectures, workshops and events have been wrapped up. The period preceding the exam period is very hectic. It is planned in such a way that the students are exposed to the pressure of managing all of these items at the same time, similar to a professional setting, but in a safe environment. However, there seems to be a disconnect developing during the exam period where students lose track of what was discussed during lectures, and what they learned during the workshops. They forget that what they have learned for the simulation should now transform into practical application also in the project proposal. The feeling that 'new' information was coming their way as exam hand-in was close probably has to do with this disconnect between the first 7 weeks of the course, and the last 2 (before the mid-January closing seminar).

Action plan:

Course structure:

The parallel structure of this course has always been confusing, and I suggest we stop doing it like that, unless the course is again shared with a colleague. The confusion was considerably less in the years when one face was connected with the one module, and another with the second.

Course information:

The Practical Guide to the Module and the Canvas page was presented and explained to the students during the introduction (not all were present). For the future, this should just be called Course Guide. The students were instructed to actually read through the documents on Canvas (perhaps it needs to be read through in-class?) and familiarize themselves with the structure the course has on Canvas, but going by some of the comments in the evaluation it seems some students did not do so (doing this in itself is also part of skills development, as they cannot expect all web-info pages to be standardized to a particular format, not even at the same department in a university). That said, the Canvas page for this course had more 'modules' in it because it is not one full semester on the page with four clearly defined 'Courses' (hence the need to present it, as was done, and the demand on students to familiarize themselves with it). Hence, another action to take is to be very, very clear during the introduction that they need to individually go through the page and *read* the documents posted themselves, and to do so continuously, as new items are added.

Lectures:

The lectures in this course are quite clearly tied to the course literature assigned to each of them, and cover a few broad themes often touched on in students' proposed projects (e.g. media/war, development/aid, conflict diplomacy/negotiations, peace pedagogy etc.), but since students write on so different kinds of projects, the literature cannot cover what they do, unless we restrict relatively severely what they can do for their projects. Therefore, there was on-site supervision time mid-December for anyone who needed to discuss different aspects of their projects, including how to relate it to the course content. Only a small handful of students took the opportunity to do so. One action to solve this issue might be to be even clearer about the importance of using the supervision time made available. Another is of course to re-

structure the course completely. This said: the exams were much more focused on the proposed project than previous generations' so the changes to the exam itself were a success.

Workshops:

Ideally, we need one more hour for each workshop – or some guarantee that students actually come prepared to the extent necessary, i.e. being able to ask relevant questions to help them develop their understanding of the tools to be applied. Perhaps one possibility is to use a 'learning diary' for this purpose, i.e. make all workshops obligatory with a hand-in based on the literature, ending with clarifying questions the student has concerning the theme of the workshop. It is clear from instructions and classroom discussions that the tools tested in the workshops may/must be used (for LFA and budget there is a requirement) in the project proposal, so it is a bit curious that this came as a surprise to some students.

Exams:

Project management: one of the respondents suggests using a 'learning diary', which I think is a quite creative idea. However, I also think students might find it difficult to keep such one as there are so many other things they have to do during the course with the simulation (project management) – it would make sense however, as a tool to get students to come prepared for workshops. It might be a good supplement to the CV and Self Valuations (which are in themselves important too, and just a reflection: when we did have Career Advisors to do this with our students the CV's were completely wrongly geared toward the corporate and business worlds). The CV's were generally good, as were the Self Valuations, but we might consider pointing out the help provided in reflecting upon oneself if doing a personality test of some kind (as suggested in the course).

Conflict complexity: The main problem here is most likely that students do not use the opportunity to get supervision on their project. Information about it may be repeated for clarity, but is voluntary.

All this said: As the course coordinator I will repeat what I have previously said, i.e. that this course needs more teachers. And never book teaching for Wednesdays!

Publishing and archiving (To be handled by the course administrator)

- ☐ The course report is published, and the students have been informed about the publication,
- ☐ The course report is archived according to the university's archiving rules,
- ☐ The course report is shared with the programme coordinator (if applicable),
- ☐ The course report is saved according to any additional requests on behalf of the department.